~~President Obama's Visit – final draft~~TheStrategic Triangle

~~Ehud Barak 789 words~~

President Obama's visit to Israel comes at a decisive juncture ~~crucial time. Israel and~~ for the Middle East and offers the opportunity for new strategic thinking. ~~are at a decisive juncture.~~

Over the past two years, an unprecedented geopolitical earthquake has shattered a generations-old regional order. What is replacing that order are unstable ~~Generations old regional order is collapsing~~transformational regimes, or even worse, failed states. ~~towards transformative regimes or even worse, failing ones.~~

~~An unprecedented geopolitical earthquake has shattered the regional order, in the last few years.~~

These dramatic changes offer some important lessons: ~~Two lessons and an insight could be drawn by Israelis~~

~~—~~ First, b~~B~~e modest when it comes to~~ith~~ predictions. ~~Especially about the future. Think of Egypt.~~ Who predicted the revolutions in Egypt and elsewhere? Who could have predicted them~~it~~?

Second, d~~D~~o n~~'o~~t rely on ~~"~~"the World" to act when worste come to worst. ~~look at~~Take Syria. Assad's jet fighters, tanks and artillery have been ~~are~~ slaughtering the Syrian people~~his own citizens~~ for two years now. Over 70,000 have been ~~Syrians~~ killed. Yet the international community has shown ~~re is~~ neither unity of purpose nor the political will to act.

Third, despite what some friends and allies of Israel believe, the root cause of the problems in the Middle East is not the failure to solve the conflict with the Palestinians.~~And an insight: many friends and allies of Israel tell us that the root cause for all the problems in the Middle East is our inability to solve the conflict with the Palestinians. Clearly this is not true. Recent developments in the Middle East have been far beyond our control, and completely independent of our deeds.~~ E ~~E~~ven if a peace agreement with the Palestinians had been signed and sealed a long time ago, the Muslim Brotherhood would still have come to power in Egypt, Syria would still be mired in a bloody civil war and Iran would still be pursuing nuclear capabilities and hegemony~~ic role~~ in the Gulf.~~.~~

~~The neighborhood is tough and tough decisions -- which require courage, conviction and mutual trust -- are urgently needed.~~

The major challenges in the Middle East today are fail~~ed~~ or failing~~ing~~ states armed with ~~tens of~~ thousands of rockets and missiles, global~~-~~ terror groups such as ~~led by~~ Al Qaeda, and ~~and the Jihadists and~~ ,of course, Iran.

In the face of these serious challenges, I see an opportunity ~~Facing this demanding array of threats, what is to be done?~~

~~I see an opportunity within the difficulties which we face. The opportunity is to join hands,~~ for the US, moderate Arab regimes and Israel ~~and try~~ to join hands and tackle these ~~all three of the~~ challenges together.

First, weWe should firstly start building a Regional Security Framework that will focus on. The RSF will be focused on a joint effort to fighting terror, protecting border security and provide missile defense. If led by the US it could provide a host of synergies for all its participants.

Second,ly, we should need launch a daring peace initiative vis-à-vis the Palestinians. A two-state solution is the only viable solution. While itIts absence is not the fountainhead of all regional troubles, but its presence achievement would help is a compelling imperative for Israel in order to secure ourIsrael's future as a Jewish and democratic state. The status quo offers only a slippery slope towards a bi national state that would threaten Israel's future.

If a final statusully fledged agreement iswould not, as I suspect, be feasible at this time, which is probably the case, Israel and the Palestinians should try to reach interim agreements (security and borders first, for example). should be tried. And if even interim agreements also prove impossible to achieve, unilateral steps that move both Israelis and Palestinians closer to their legitimate goals in a final peace agreement should be taken. will end up being unobtainable then unilateral steps, should be considered in order to place a wedge on the dangerous slippery slope towards a bi national state. It is not just a good idea, long due, per se, it might help the abovementioned joining of hands

Third, Iran's nuclear weapons program, And of course, there is Iran. It is Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities which is the paramount challenge facing Israel, the region and the world today, must be eliminated. An nuclear hegemonic Iranian regime with hegemonic ambitions and armed with nuclear weapons would spells

the end of any conceivable non-proliferation regime. Saudi Arabia, Turkey and later Egypt would soon~~ill~~ follow suit~~.~~ The danger of a nuclear weapon falling into the hands of terror groups would increase exponentially. ~~In the future, even terrorist groups may try.~~ Iran's Gulf neioghbors would be ~~will~~ intimidated, its terror proxies would be emboldened, and operating under a nuclear umbrella, ~~its neighbors in the Gulf, Terror sponsored groups and rogue proxies will be emboldened~~ its minions would unleash terrorism throughout the region and around the world. ~~and terror disruptive and murderous activities will more intensively spread all over the region.~~

~~A nuclear Iran is an imminent and acute danger to the world and the region.~~ Preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons now is no simple task and not without significant risks. But ~~Dealing with it won't be simple now. But~~ dealing with a nuclear Iran a few years down the road will be far~~much~~ more complicated, and much more costly, and could produce the most horrific ~~in terms of both financial resources and human lives and could produce even more dangerous unintended~~ consequences.

Diplomats are still working to find a solution. Tough sanctions are hurting Iran's economu. But as a long ~~Diplomacy is still trying to solve it and sanctions are unprecedented and hurting. But being a~~ long time observer of Iranian machinations, ~~maneuvering~~ I do not believe that diplomacy and sanctions~~it~~ alone will lead to a~~a~~ moment of truth where the Ayatullahs will decide to give up their nuclear program.

Thus all options, including the military one, must remain squarely on the table. And when we say that all options are on the

table, we must truly be prepared to use them. ~~When we say it we mean it. We expect all those who say it to mean it as well.~~

Buttressed by a rock solid Israel-US relationship, t~~T~~he strategic triangle ~~made~~ of a ~~the~~ r~~"R~~egional Security Framework~~",;~~ a reinvigorated p~~P~~eace p~~P~~rocess with the Palestinians~~,;~~ and an effective halt of the Iranian nuclear program~~,~~ ; ~~buttressed by a solid Israel-US relationship,~~ is the most effective approach to deal with the dynamic challenges on our horizon.

But this stragetic triangle will not emerge on its own. It demands US leadership, and the willingness of regional players to make tough decisions. ~~Only the US can put the whole triangle on the table and lead it. Regional leaders readiness to take decisions will be needed~~. But as our old sages said: "If not now… When?".